

beneficial business relationships between Asian and European Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

(b) It is expected that the various initiatives likely to be implemented under the aegis of "Asia Invest" would lead to a large number of contacts between businessmen and economic operators on both sides, which can result in significant improvement in expanding investment and trade cooperation between two sides.

Simplification of Export Promotion Schemes

3258. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently simplified the export promotion schemes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the view of the export houses were taken in this regard and the reaction of the export houses on simplification of export promotion schemes at present; and

(d) the extent to which exporters have been benefited ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (d) Simplification of Export Policy and Procedures is a continuous process which is undertaken in consultation with the various Export Promotion Councils, concerned administrative Ministries and also keeping in mind the suggestions received from time to time from the trade and industry through their Apex bodies like FIEO, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, CII etc. Some of the significant steps taken in this regard include provision of green channel clearance of export and import consignments to specified categories of exporters, progressive reduction of licensing and other discretionary controls on imports and exports increased delegation of powers for implementing the various export promotion schemes and introduction of computer based operations to expedite various clearances.

The effect of these efforts may be seen in the growth of exports which in absolute terms increased from US \$ 26.33 billion in 1994-95 to US \$ 31.83 billion in 1995-96.

[Translation]

Registration of Cement Companies

3259. SHRI KACHARU BHARU RAUT: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of cement companies registered in the country during each of the last three years, State-wise; and

(b) the details of cement companies functioning in the country, State-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) After the delicensing of the cement industry

with effect from the 25th July, 1991, entrepreneurs are required to only file an Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum (IEM) with the Government of India, subject to locational clearance by the State Government authorities. The State-wise number of IEMs filed during 1994, 1995 and 1996 are given in statement-I.

(b) A statement showing the State-wise distribution of large cement plants functioning in the country is given in statement-II. Apart from these, there are about 310 mini cement plants in the country having a total installed capacity of nine million tonnes. However, State-wise details of these plants are not maintained centrally.

STATEMENT-I

State-wise number of Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum (IEMs) filed during the last three years

State	1994	1995	1996
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	293	468	403
Assam	9	14	6
Bihar	37	53	44
Gujarat	756	1113	694
Haryana	269	425	326
Himachal Pradesh	56	83	42
Jammu & Kashmir	3	18	7
Karnataka	177	235	160
Kerala	51	95	80
Madhya Pradesh	251	368	261
Maharashtra	769	967	736
Meghalaya	1	1	6
Nagaland	1		1
Orissa	20	55	27
Punjab	211	280	187
Rajasthan	241	301	233
Sikkim		1	
Tamil Nadu	498	731	530
Tripura			1
Uttar Pradesh	382	503	520
West Bengal	156	330	232
Arunachal Pradesh	1		
Andaman & Nicobar		1	4
Chandigarh	1	1	9
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	220	202	127
Delhi	90	62	3
Goa	33	63	54
Pondicherry	61	66	55
Daman & Diu	77	66	77
Total	4664	6502	4825

STATEMENT-II

State-wise number of large cement plants in operation

State	No. of Cement Plants
Delhi	1
Haryana	2
Punjab	1
Himachal Pradesh	4
Jammu & Kashmir	1
Rajasthan	14
Uttar Pradesh	5
Bihar	5
Orissa	3
West Bengal	2
Assam	1
Meghalaya	1
Tamil Nadu	8
Andhra Pradesh	17
Karnataka	8
Kerala	1
Maharashtra	7
Gujarat	11
Madhya Pradesh	23
Total	115

[English]

Nidhi Companies

3260: SHRI K. PARASURAMAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have exempted the Nidhi Companies from the interest rate ceiling on deposits;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such exemptions is likely to affect the business of other financial institutions particularly the banking sector; and

(d) if so, the steps the Government propose to take to remedy the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India had announced certain policy measures on 24th August, 1996 granting freedom to Nidhi Companies to fix their own rate of interest on deposits selectively on a case-to-case basis subject to compliance of certain conditions. RBI had issued a press release on 15.1.1997 giving further relaxations. Nidhi Companies for

the purposes of fixing up their own rate of interest on deposits have to comply with the following conditions:-

(i) The Nidhi company has complied with the directions contained in Government of India, Department of Company Affairs Notification No. GSR. 773 (E) dated December 4, 1995.

(ii) The net owned fund of the Nidhi company is positive as on March 31, 1996.

(iii) The Nidhi company is and will be in a position to repay the amount of its liabilities including the interest payable to the depositors as and when their claims arise.

(iv) The ratio of net owned fund to incremental deposit liabilities over the deposit liabilities as on January 15, 1997 of the Nidhi Company does not exceed 1:20 as on the date of the application. However, such of those Nidhis which are maintaining net owned fund to deposit ratio of 1:20 or less as on January 15, 1997 should continue to maintain a ratio not exceeding 1:20 on the aggregate deposit liabilities.

(v) The compliance with the above requirements should be certified by the Nidhi company's statutory auditors, being the member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Seizure of Gold and Foreign Currency

3261. SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of smuggled gold seized by custom officials during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) amount of foreign currency seized during the above period, State-wise and year-wise;

(c) number of arrests made in this regard State-wise and year-wise; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to check the smuggling of gold and foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Committee on SSI

3262. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA:
DR. MAHADEEPAK SINGH SHAKYA:

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state: